

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended in a sincere attempt to place the case in condition for allowance. More particularly, claim 1 now contains the limitations of claim 8 with further language based upon disclosure in the specification at page 9, lines 10 to 25. The claims before the Examiner are claims 1 to 7, 9 to 12, and 14 to 18.

The rejection of claims 1 to 12 and 14 to 18 under 35 USC 103 as allegedly unpatentable over Mizuno et al. '029 in view of Wada et al. '300 is respectfully traversed.

As indicated above, claim 1 has been amended to recite a further structural feature of the invention, more particularly that in each section of the honeycomb section including each slit, each of those slits is exposed along an upper end surface and a lower end surface of the honeycomb structure with a continuous area in the center of the honeycomb structure in which no slit is formed and which is not exposed to the outer surface of the honeycomb structure. Such an arrangement provides an improved honeycomb structure because no cracks are generated in the honeycomb structure, even if there is a large temperature differential in the

whole honeycomb structure; see page 9, lines 20 to 25 of the specification.

In the section of the paragraph bridging pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action (and particularly at that bridging location), the Examiner asserts that Fig. 4 of Mizuno et al. '029 shows a configuration wherein each section of the honeycomb structure including each slit there is a continuous area in which no slit is formed and which is not exposed to the outer surface of the honeycomb structure. Fig. 4 of the reference shows a slit in the outer surface of the honeycomb structure but in no way teaches or suggests the arrangements shown in instant Fig. 4. As indicated above, claim 1 has been amended to be more specific to the instant Fig. 4 configuration. The advantages of such a structure as claimed are shown in the specification. See Table 1 on page 16. The Examiner is asked to compare the degree of formed cracks for the structures shown in Figs. 4(a), 4(b), and 7 with the values for the structures shown in Figs. 1(a), 1(d), 3(a), and 3(b); see also the first two paragraphs on page 17 of the specification.

Applicants also maintain for the reasons presented in correspondence to date that the references properly are not combinable and that the claims as amended now patentably define

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over the art.

The Examiner's comments in the Response to Arguments on pages 3 to 5 of the Office Action were noted and taken into consideration when preparing this paper. The observations in the full paragraph on page 4 regarding structure are noted. Claim 1 now recites structure that patentably distinguishes the claims over the references. The rejection should be withdrawn.

The Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned if additional changes are required in the case prior to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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